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## ECUMENISM AND HISTORY

THERE is beginning to be a quantity of Catholic commentary on ecumenical affairs. There are, for instance, the various commentaries on the 1954 Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches, which are enumerated by Canon Thils, professor at Louvain University, in his article *Mouvement œcuménique et ecclesiologie*.<sup>1</sup> Such a state of things is certainly matter for rejoicing. Yet it is precisely the Evanston Conference which makes one wonder whether the Catholic commentators, in their writings, penetrate the fundamental ecumenic reality which was revealed in a particularly clear way at this assembly. As far as my information goes, I must reply in the negative. Though I do not even now claim to have reached a complete understanding—and it has taken me time to get where I am—I should like to tell the readers of the *E.C.Q.* quite simply what I have grasped of the subject, in the hope that it may be of some use to them. Let us say at the beginning, to avoid all misunderstanding, that this exposition will be as faithful an echo as possible of actual ecumenical ideology. The principal criticisms or reservations imposed upon us in its regard by the Catholic faith will only be considered in conclusion.

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By his death and resurrection Jesus Christ has accomplished the promise of redemption given by God to sinful mankind after the Fall, and has become king of redeemed mankind, of the whole cosmos. But this is the situation as won by Christ.

<sup>1</sup> *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses*, 37 (1956), 355–62.

*In fact*, before his return in glory, and this too is a promise, his kingship is not universally known or recognized, nor his kingdom fully established. The time between the Ascension of our Lord and his *Parousia* is therefore the time of expectation, and of a progress to be made according to the divine plan, in a growing awareness of this kingship which will become perfect only in the eschatological kingdom. It is this process which is the content and meaning of human history. The divine promise ensures the fulfilment of his process in spite of all apparent and transient setbacks which it may suffer. It is the object of a hope which we can call historic. To the better understanding of this we will now turn.

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The principal agent in the historical process is Jesus Christ himself. Without renouncing direct intervention when he thinks it necessary, he has chosen in the midst of redeemed humanity a helpmate—the Church; and he makes of it by his grace a society where his kingdom is already known and recognized, an anticipation of the kingdom of God, a fellowship of service towards the rest of mankind. This 'rest' is the world, which stands out, in opposition to the Church, as a part of mankind redeemed indeed, but where his kingship is not yet known, or recognized. Instead of Christ who is the prince of unity, peace and liberty, there reigns there the 'prince of this world', and so division, discord and bondage.

This dissimilarity, deep because theological, between the Church and the World, will disappear in the fulfilled kingdom of God; but it is for the Church to work to reduce it here below. Yet she knows well that the Christian transformation of the world can only be achieved by the final and decisive intervention of the Lord himself.

Thus the service of the Church to the world is that of a witness for Christ; even that of a witness twice over, both by word and by life. So essential is it to the Church that it could be called her *raison d'être* to be *a-mundum*; and then it is authentic only when it is humble, aware of being only a minute co-operation with the historic action of Jesus Christ.

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Let us now make a short analysis of the Church's mission to the world.

Because of the very character of its witness, in order to bear it effectively, the Church is differentiated into two groups,

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numerically unequal : on one side a minority of 'ministers', on the other an overwhelming majority of laymen. Both are completely consecrated to the Lord by their life of faith, obedience and adoration, but they differ in their functions.

The ministry of the former is above all a witness by the Word which should, among other things, underline the theological contrast between the Church and the world. With this object the 'ministers' stand apart from the world, and act *upon* it.

As for the laity, their ministry of witness is more one of Life, although the Word should not be completely excluded from it. To understand it properly let us first ask what a layman is ? In the Evanston report called, '*The Laity : the Christian in his Vocation*', the answer, long sought in the ecumenical movement, is given, and that from two points of view.

First of all a sociological definition : the layman is the man (or woman) who earns his living by secular work, that is to say work done in and for the world : this work is for him (or her) his Christian witness and so his ministry.

But to make it this, the layman needs to understand it theologically as obedience to God's command—and it is for the 'ministers' to inculcate this idea. His work must be work well done. It is then only, that, considered in the light of the day of Christ's coming, it will have eternal meaning and value.

The layman, then, occupies by his ministry a special position in Christendom entirely proper to himself : because his ministry places him in the world he is of the world ; because he fulfils it as a Christian witness he is of the Church. This gives us a definition of him, a theological one this time. But this position of the layman is also particularly perilous, because, if it makes him serve one master, although in two ways, it none the less exposes him to the temptation in the end to serve two.

The value of the lay ministry, it is said, can never be exaggerated. Thanks to it the Church is spread abroad *in* the world, and is no longer solely turned *towards* the world ; she is the continuing sign of redemption in the affairs of the world.

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Up to this point we have seen the mission of the Church to the world as God sees it, deliberately ignoring man's sin. But this exists, and it brings about alterations to which we must now turn.

Driven by pride, which is *the sin*, the Church gives herself up to preoccupation with herself and forgets the world, or else she witnesses to herself instead of to her Lord, and so must have recourse to secular means: money, diplomacy, constraint and the rest.

What becomes of the world in these conditions? In any case, instead of advancing towards the achievement of its true destiny in Jesus Christ, it retreats ever further from this achievement, and the Church appears to the world either as a hostile power which it must fight, or as an unreal institution, completely abstract and as such without the slightest interest for it.

But that is not all: it is the world which sets to work on the Church with the result that its spirit, which is at the opposite pole to Christ's gradually permeates it more and more. The laity are the most vulnerable to this influence, and we know the reason for it. The Church, more and more deformed by sin, witnesses less and less to Christ and his mission to the world suffers a kind of progressive paralysis. Since this mission is the *raison d'être* of the Church, she ceases to be herself. Both for herself and for the world this is the very greatest of evils.

However, the course of human history cannot be completely put out of joint by this penetration by the world because the Lord himself will intervene to redress the situation. He will judge and pardon the erring Church, call it to repentance, and remind it of its true and humble historic mission. Persecution, for instance, is such an intervention. Deprived of all human aid, the Church then turns to her Lord to know him as her sole support, and to know herself as a pure instrument in his hands. She is never more fully the Church.

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But apart from persecutions, there are other historic interventions of Jesus Christ, no doubt less striking and direct, but no less real. There is ecumenism. Its origins are proof of it. Ever since the international conference of Protestant missionary societies at Edinburgh in 1910, some of its members realized under the Lord's inspiration, that to remedy the deficiencies which were then brought to light in the realm of missionary activity, the disunited Christian Churches must come into association in order mutually to help themselves to become the Church which could fully exercise her mission to the world in all its sectors, and so work towards the coming of the kingdom. The ecumenical idea was born. But thirty

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years went by before this association of Churches, calling itself the World Council of Churches, was actually constituted.

Its general assemblies which meet about every five years, aim at helping member Churches to grasp the situation in the world with regard to the Christian message, and to propagate it there. At the Evanston assembly the features of ecumenism were particularly well delineated, because the Christian message was there considered from the point of view of Christian hope, and of the ministry of the laity.

It was there established that the world of to-day is above all ignorant of its true destiny and in consequence sinks into loss of hope or into false hopes, and that a gulf exists between workaday life and ecclesiastical life at all levels. The explanation for this state of affairs was found in the deficiency of the laity's ministry: the latter, too secularized, to the point of sharing the false hopes of the world, no longer understand this. The fault in this matter is not only theirs, but also, if not primarily, that of the 'ministers' who, confined in their own professional milieu and problems, can no longer educate them fittingly for this ministry. Evanston proposed that the education of the laity should be pursued on two planes: in the first place the 'ministers' should be initiated into the problems of work in the world, then they should aid the laity to solve these problems by means of a new ethic. The place, par excellence, for this formation will be the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Geneva, pending the establishment of similar institutes elsewhere also. The whole general secretariat of the W.C.C. was reorganized at Evanston in the light of the ecumenical reality which was there discovered. It now comprises three divisions: Studies, Ecumenical Action, Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, and the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs—the whole orientated, as one can see, towards aid to member Churches in accomplishing their mission in the world.

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Having thus rapidly reviewed the ecumenical idea and its chief manifestation at Evanston in 1954, let us sum up. In the eyes of its promoters ecumenism is a great historical, even eschatological force, because it is an intervention of the Lord of history to redress its course and to direct it towards his second coming. This conception, which claims to be biblical, implies a theology of the Church and of the World, these two realities being inseparable for it. The two are equally fallible

and the only privilege of the Church is that of being anterior to the world in the divine election.

The moment seems to have arrived to make those few criticisms that were promised. They are very short because, if protracted, they would deserve a separate article. œcumenism's theology of history, because it is in effect based on the biblical data, in its main lines, is acceptable to a Catholic. As to the theology of the Church, on two counts above all he will have to deny its claim to be biblical: according to Holy Scripture the Church does not exist only for the world but for the Father too; among other gifts which the Lord has granted her there is that of doctrinal infallibility (to examine this see Charles Journe's book *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, Vol. I). It would, however, be unjust to pass over in silence such a symptomatic and happy meeting of ecclesiological pre-occupations in the Catholic Church and in œcumenism as far as the problem of the laity is concerned. Let it suffice to compare the theological definition of the layman given at Evanston with that of Père Congar: 'Laymen are at the same time the World and the Church, which is true neither of clerks nor of monks'.<sup>2</sup>

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In a final paragraph I want to ask why Catholics studying œcumenism do not easily see its idea. Dr Visser 't Hooft has reproached them,<sup>3</sup> for instance, with very often confusing it with the *Faith and Order* movement, which seeks to promote unity of faith and organization amongst the separated Churches; whereas, in fact, the department of this name is only one of four that compose the Studies division of the œcumenical Council, and even that commission aims at this unity not for itself but in order to strengthen the Mission of the Churches in the world.

The reason for this shortcoming seems to be that the Catholic theology of history and of the historic rôle of the Church is not yet very developed and is for the moment unfamiliar to current Catholic mentality.

If my remarks can contribute something to change this state of affairs for the better they will have found their justification.

DOM CLEMENT LIALINE.

<sup>2</sup> *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat*, Paris, 1953, p. 641.

<sup>3</sup> *The Ecumenical Review*, 8 (1955-56), p. 192.

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## NEW LIGHT ON NICOLAS BERDYAEV

THE philosophic thought of Berdyaev takes its issue from a pessimistic sense in the face of the social and historic world. Out of the refusal of this world it turns to the search for another, better world, for certain ideals which Berdyaev has defined as the highest metaphysical principles. In the tension of the dualism thus indicated, his philosophy stands complete. The critique of "this world" in the light of the principles of the "other" world, and the attempt, at the same time, to interpret the one according to the principles of the other, and thereby to resolve the dualism, is the leading theme of his writings. It is also the background of the thought determined by his picture of the world, against which—in the works of his maturity—comes to be formulated and shaped out as their central philosophic motif, the idea of *Objectification*.<sup>1</sup>

This is the opening sentence of the author's foreword to the important new study of Berdyaev, with which we are here to be concerned.<sup>1</sup> If there be a slight criticism to be voiced, it is perhaps on the purely pragmatic ground, that any tendency to use 'labels' may serve to set up a sort of smoke-screen, in that it may call up certain superficial prejudices in the minds of some readers (more especially among English Catholics, it is to be feared). This is by reference to what may seem the use, in a too absolute sense, of the words 'pessimistic' and 'dualism': the latter particularly dangerous in English Catholic eyes . . . But no book ought to be summarily classified or estimated by the mere presence of two suspect words in its first sentence. Catholics above all, even those not ordinarily addicted to overmuch philosophic reading, will agree that the action of a Berdyaev is turning away from the world in disgust, and something like despair, is not without distinguished precedents. It has been said, for example, 'I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world': and again, 'The whole world lieth in evil'. If, therefore, Nicolas Berdyaev is to be classified as a 'world-pessimist' and a 'dualist' he will be found in the company of our Divine Lord himself and his 'beloved disciple'. Further examples need not be multiplied (if only because they are too numerous); and after all, it must be acknowledged as a matter of some difficulty for a Christian, at least without a certain sophistry—to adopt any other attitude towards the world.

<sup>1</sup> Roman Rössler: *Das Weltbild Nikolai Berdjajews—Existenz und Objektivation*, Gottingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1956, pp. 179. DM. 16.80.

This study is its author's thesis for the doctorate in philosophy at Heidelberg, and it must take high rank among the assessments of Berdyaev's thought which have thus far appeared; it may well be found, in fact, to take the foremost place. Small in size, but concise and comprehensive in statement, dense and compact in thought, and very competently constructed, it has two major advantages over most of its predecessors: first—it is able, through the author's knowledge of Russian, to draw upon all the works of Berdyaev's early, 'pre-exilic' period; secondly—it proceeds from the general background of an adequate philosophic formation. Its overriding advantage, however, lies perhaps in the fact that it appears to be the first serious attempt to explain Berdyaev—by Berdyaev! and not by some pre-conceived scheme or system of the writer's own. Such an attempt must necessarily postulate a certain balance and open-mindedness in the approach to its subject, and these are two of the book's chief virtues. It must also necessitate an approach upon an intellectual level at least approximate to that of its subject's own approach to his problems—it must meet him on his own chosen ground; for this reason, the book is perhaps the most satisfying study of its kind that has yet appeared.

Dr Rössler's book falls into two equal halves: in the first, a thorough survey is made of all the earlier writings, of which no translations at present exist. The second covers (with one exception)<sup>2</sup> the entire production of the years of exile. In the first part, the development of Berdyaev's thought is closely followed from its first beginnings in the writings of his formative years; but this is rightly carried out by constant reference to the indispensable materials made available in the great autobiographical 'Attempt at a Study in Self-knowledge' (less satisfactorily entitled in English translation: *Dream and Reality*), which appeared a year or two after his death. (Dr Rössler characterizes this as 'of inestimable value').

One thing at least, which emerges strongly from the first half of this study, is that, in the ordinary sense of the word, Berdyaev's philosophic thought did not 'develop' at all—at least as regards any gaining in depth. His earliest books appear as so many attempts to find expression according to varying modes, for certain moral principles and perceptions which

<sup>2</sup> This is *Truth and Revelation*. There is ground, however, for believing that the English trans., first to appear, was made from MS. before the appearance of the Russian edition.

existed already, fully formed and developed within his own inner consciousness. First one, and then another, he seems to have tried them : Marxist social-political theory—neo-Kantian Idealism—as vehicles for what was pressing for expression from within, and found them wanting. He read voraciously, and seems to have made sincere and genuine efforts to recognize his own deep-lying intuitions and convictions in the social-philosophic theories and political ethics chiefly in favour among his contemporaries. He tried, at first, to force the molten matter of his own innermost and morally determined convictions into the moulds provided by the prevailing forms of materialism, apparently out of a sense (also, though perhaps less deeply, morally grounded) of strict duty towards his associates and co-workers. But the effect of this was to set up within himself a condition of moral and spiritual tension and contradiction which eventually proved unendurable.

Dr Rössler traces to their source in these early works some of the major tendencies and currents which were to characterize Berdyaev's thought so powerfully in his later years. For example : "The conception of the world as "process", as "uninterrupted occupation, action and struggle" which here, in borrowing from Marx (he) developed, was already preparing beforehand that "dynamism" of which his later philosophy was to give the impression" (p. 13). In those days he saw the 'social process as "the highest product of Being"' (loc. cit.). His first book, *Subjectivism and Individualism in General Philosophy*, appears to have proposed a 'psychologically grounded "social monism" as a means for the suppression of the "dualism between matter and spirit" . . . Sociology means to him the reduction of the material basis and the ideological superstructure to the "physical"' (p. 14). And 'here lies the beginning of (his) later "metaphysic of the spirit", which likewise denies the dualism of spirit and matter and, in the end, sets "spirit" and "personal existence" in the place of the "psychic"—here, still as yet elevated to the status of a fundamental principle' (loc. cit.). And if, on the other hand, 'Of the personalism under the sign of which (his) mature philosophy stands, there is, in this earliest period, very little discernible trace' (loc. cit.), this may be because he appears to have been trying earnestly to convince himself that 'the unfolding of the individuality, the differentiation of the personality, are only possible upon the background of a correspondingly forward-progressive differentiation of society ; because society is to be conceived as the "psychic reciprocal result" of personality'

(loc. cit.). It seems obvious that these early 1900's were for Berdyaev a period of real intellectual and spiritual *Sturm und Drang*—of intense 'trial and error' (he himself looks back upon it all, in Chapter ii of his 'Autobiography', and recalls something of what he felt in the process). As book follows book, we see him casting off, one by one, these foreign influences—first accepted voluntarily and in all good faith—whose sole office in his regard appears to have been that of deepening and intensifying the condition of spiritual tension already existent and innate within him as a true part of his nature. All this account of the successive phases of his inward development, as these are reflected in his writings, is brilliantly and concisely done, and loses nothing of its proper element of vital intensity. Especially to be noted is the refutation (pp. 21–22) of Zenkovsky's distorted account of Berdyaev's 'romanticism', in which this leading characteristic of his spirituality is analysed and set apart from the adulterated version of it proposed by his critic; and (on pp. 23–25) the account of his increasing absorption in the deeper moral and ethical issues, in his now fully conscious quest for the 'meaning of life'.

His uncertainties were now disappearing: he was beginning to know the world and the social scene in their true colours, and had fewer illusions about the possibility of changing their dominant directions and characteristics by any sort of reforms imposed from without. He began to recognize the existence, and the real nature, of the inward void underlying the outward appearances of men and things, and to realize that the efforts of Church and State to stanch the constant moral and spiritual haemorrhage—the draining away thereinto—of sheer 'physical energy' were bound to remain as fruitless in lasting results as they have ever been, while directed upon 'society' in its universal sense. His developing 'personalism' was leading him more and more to the conclusion that the application of generalized and merely external remedies to the 'collective consciousness' amounted to nothing more than a masking of that inward window in each individual member of the 'collective' which opens—in each separate human personality—upon that intimate, private and *unconscious* 'void' which is the individual's own neglected and unsatisfied human soul; this is the 'open wound' which must first of all be healed—the health of the collective follows automatically upon that of its separate and individual parts. For this reason, Berdyaev's attention now begins to be increasingly occupied by the question of individual 'freedom'—understood as the intimate,

personal and immediate access of each individual human soul to its Creator at the centre of its own existence—together with the recognition and identification of all influences, of whatsoever origin—external and imposed, or arising from the individual himself—which could serve to hinder this. At this period of his development, then, everything in his nature is subordinated to the increasing awareness of the inward 'moral imperative' (*sollens*), in the discovery and development of which in each individual soul, the only hope of any real progress seems to lie. It was the neglect of such issues—the refusal, among his Marxist-minded associates, to recognize where the roots of the trouble really lay—their inability to conceive of any remedy other than externally applied, for the world's evils—which drove him ever further into his own soul in quest of the true elements of a solution (it was never at any time the private quest for his own personal salvation), and initiated that increasingly critical attitude towards Marxism which eventually withdrew him from that circle of interests. One has the impression that he regarded Man (not 'man' in the abstract or the collective sense, but Man in the singular, personal and concrete sense) very much as Nesmelov appears to have done: i.e. as a 'riddle'. It was but right and natural, therefore, that he should seek the solution of this first of all in that quarter in which it presented itself to him most intimately—in himself, and start from this as a basis for further and outwardly-directed action. Altogether, it appears to be just this independent and personalistic tendency of Berdyaev's to seek (and perhaps, still more, to *find*!) the solution of spiritual problems first of all in an inward direction, and as it were from his own resources, which has all along caused most disquiet to his critics (it is not quite clear to what extent Dr Rössler himself may be in agreement with some of them). Berdyaev has given us, in the pages of his 'Autobiography', the chief reasons why he failed to recognize the true signs of a genuine Christian spirituality in an outward direction—in the Orthodox Church as he saw and experienced it during his earliest years, and there seems no reason to attribute this failure entirely to a mere 'imperviousness to Grace', or to 'spiritual pride' on his part; Dr Rössler recognizes that he was not alone in his criticisms of the Church (as this figured outwardly before the world) in a note on p. 51 of his study. If one fails to recognize outwardly that which one is seeking, it is because of the pre-existence of an inward model or exemplar to which what is outwardly perceived must conform in order to be recognized—but, in

fact, does not !<sup>3</sup> One is tempted to discuss these pages in detail, so deeply interesting and profound in treatment as they are ; but space is insufficient and they can only be earnestly recommended to the reader ; it is to be doubted whether Berdyaev has ever yet received such deeply penetrating consideration outside that of his own *Autobiography* ! Dr Rössler merits our gratitude.

After his three years of political exile in Northern Russia (during which period, however, his pen was never idle), his Marxist connections now being broken, he passed through a negative and transitional phase, marked chiefly by an increased sharpening (!) of his critical powers and tendencies, in the midst of a—for him—completely new circle : this time of a literary and aesthetic character. It was in these days that he first began to experience a definite and conscious religious attraction—as distinct, that is, from the previously subconscious, yet always deeply innate 'feeling' for religion. Merezhkovsky's study of the religious element in the thought and writings of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky was here of decisive influence. Again, too, 'On the way towards religion he received a new impulse through his wife, whom he first met in the summer of 1904. Her deep religiosity and supra-confessional Christianity—she then professed herself a member of the "Church of the Holy Spirit"' (but shortly after her marriage became a Catholic) 'awakened kindred chords in him' (p. 34). From this time forth his writings begin to be marked by that powerful undercurrent of religious urgency which is to permeate them in ever-increasing degree, and finally to take on that note of the 'prophetic' and 'eschatological' which characterizes so strongly those of his full power and maturity. The articles written during these years, and published in collected form in the volume *Sub specie aeternitatis*, in 1907, together with a separate work *The New Religious Consciousness and Society*, touch already in their range upon all those profounder problems of life which were afterwards to occupy the foreground of his thought, and to find such trenchant expression throughout his later years. (One might express the hope that these two works may one day perhaps find a translator.)

<sup>3</sup> The principle here involved has been stated with admirable conciseness by Père Roger Leys, s.j. : ' . . . where does one see the true visage of the Church if not—since "the Kingdom of God is within you"—within oneself ? One can perceive it also in others, but always starting from an inference by which we recognise them as "like", or "more like", or at least as akin, to that which we bear of the divine within us' : (Cf. *L'Image de Dieu chez St Grégoire de Nysse*, Brussels, 1951, p. 121).

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The contemplation of the art treasures, chiefly of Florence, on his first visit to Italy, in 1912, touched off in him some deep reserve of pent-up creative energy, and resulted, on his return to Russia, in that flame of inspiration which produced, 'in a state bordering upon ecstasy', perhaps the most remarkable of all his books, *The Meaning of Creativity*. This was the last of his works to be written and published in Russia: thereafter, for a period of about ten years, his pen seems to have been stilled. It is, perhaps rightly, with some consideration of this book that Dr Rössler opens the second half of his study, since it contains, in clear-cut and challenging terms, practically all the great themes which are later—singly, or sometimes in combination—to be orchestrated in one or another of Berdyaev's works written during his years of exile in Western Europe. *The Meaning of Creativity* is, in fact, the first work of his 'middle period'.

'Absolutely central with him though it is, Berdyaev himself deals comparatively little with the idea of "Objectification"' (p. 8); and indeed, it is only with *Spirit and Reality* (1937), that it first emerges with any degree of clearness. *Metaphysique Eschatologique*,<sup>4</sup> however (practically his last work), has for sub-title, 'Acte Createur et Objectivation', and the subject receives therein the fullest discussion. It is, therefore, with good reason that the whole of the second half of Dr Rössler's study is given up to it. Here again, the degree of clear thinking evinced by the consideration of the idea under a range of separate aspects, and the systematic planning of these are admirable.

It is necessary, at the outset, to clear the mind of the old and well-worn antithesis between 'subject' and 'object'; as well as of the concept of 'objective reality'. Berdyaev is dealing with something quite other than a mere mental, or intellectual, attitude or concept: 'objectification' is, for him, a psycho-spiritual phenomenon. The idea is bound up, in fact, with his 'existentialism'. Objectification means, for Berdyaev, precisely the defeat of what is—not an act of mere intellection, still less of ratiocination—but nothing less than a vital and dynamic process. As he himself expresses it, in *Metaphysique Eschatologique*: 'Purely intellectual and discursive knowledge creates an objective world without contact with reality. The decisive rôle in knowledge belongs not to the logical process of thought . . . but to the emotional and volitional tension bound up with the integral spirit. Knowledge is creation, not the passive reflection of objects' (pp. 48–49). 'There is no such thing as

<sup>4</sup> In English trans. as *The Beginning and the End*.

an objective spirit, there is only an objectification of spirit ; and this is a deformation, a self-alienation, an adaptation of the spirit to the cosmic data (or, as Dr Rössler calls it *weltgegebenheit*) of the world . . . The creative fire of the spirit goes cold. Objectification is a chilling down' (p. 37). Franz von Baader (by whom, too, Berdyaev was a good deal influenced) coined an expressive term as a general title for his *cabiers* of philosophic and theosophic reflections : *Fermenta Cognitionis* conveys very well the sort of mental, or psycho-spiritual, process of which Berdyaev speaks above. The idea is, above all that of an *organic* process. The 'existential' mode of knowledge it suggests is that of a penetration-within—an 'inhabitation'—of, not the 'object', but the *other subject*. It results, not in the formation of a 'concept', but in an intimate and integral *realization-from-within* of the 'other subject'. It deals in living matter because, to use an embryological analogy, the knowing subject, is in uninterrupted 'umbilical' connection with the subject of knowledge ; concepts are derived from action upon dead matter—"objectified" matter, *dead* because already detached into separate existence. Existential thought and knowledge, however, are thought and knowledge as they should be, in Berdyaev's eyes : it is the tragedy of human cognitive process—itself part of the global tragedy of fallen human existence—that this living, fluid, flashing and dynamic "thought-substance" must be poured, like molten metal into those static moulds which are the 'concepts' and 'formulations' devised for common social intercourse—the common currency of universally recognizable 'notions', acknowledge everywhere by the broad averagings of 'common sense' as the fixed medium of common exchange. This is the process of 'objectification', by which the living spirit and its living, creative cognitions must be 'chilled down'—congealed—*coagulated*, for the purposes of day-to-day commerce and administration according to established custom. Objectification is simply the coagulation of living spiritual substance into the terms of fixed, dead and changeless 'tokens', like those of the common coinage.

Berdyaev, however, though primarily a philosopher, by no means dwelt wholly in the world of thought ; he was nothing if not a radical and thoroughgoing realist. So that we find Dr Rössler showing us the ramifications of the malady of 'objectification' (in his final section of 'The Objectification of the Spirit') under such headings as, for example, 'Objectification as Subjection to Time (*Verzeitlichung*)' ('Time, according to Berdyaev, is the fundamental form of the objectification of

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Existence ; it is, first and foremost, the product of the universal objectification': p. 136); 'The Objectification of the Creative Act in the Objectified World' ('Berdyaev never tires of emphasizing that in the conditions of this world a genuine creation capable of transforming Life and the World is impossible. This is due to the fact that the Spirit itself, in order to its own realization, must make use of the media furnished by the objectified world-order, and thereby becomes itself objectified' (p. 142); 'Objectification as Socialization' ('The principle of the "general", which is inimical to the personal and the individual, expresses itself—as product of objectification—biologically, in the breeding-process of natural life, in the laws of thought as Logic, and sociologically, in the general norms and laws of social life' (p. 146); and so on, through all the melancholy catalogue. These sections, and the others which precede and follow them, present—by means of a close and skilfully woven tapestry of passages from all his later works—*The World-Picture of Nicolas Berdyaev*; and the cumulative impression, which one brings away from the contemplation of it, is akin to the picture formed in the mind by the major prophetic books of the Old Testament.

It is the unflinching contemplation of this 'World-Picture' which gave to the mind of Berdyaev that tendency towards the 'eschatological', and to his writings that characteristic of the 'prophetic', which have given him a distinctive place among modern philosophers. With his ruthlessly realistic vision, and his refusal to avert it from the complete realization of what lay before it, his 'Pessimism' becomes only an inexact synonym for moral strength in the face of adverse realities. His apparent obsession with the idea of 'Freedom'—taken by so many of his critics as the outward expression of an intense 'spiritual pride' (manifesting itself most of all in 'contempt of ecclesiastical authority'), or sometimes dubbed 'Anarchism'—resolves itself, after all, in his own words, into a longing for mere liberation : '... as to me, I desire nothing more than to surmount the obstacles which impede my liberation from this world into the freedom of another' (*Dream and Reality*, p. 271). (Though perhaps what most of all disturbs the critics is the fact that he desires a like 'freedom' for all his fellow-men !). Seeing and knowing the world for what it is, there is no wonder that he could see no help for it save in its complete transfiguration ; and no hope of this save in the 'eschatological' fires of the last times ! He could have made his own Blake's words *To Tirzab* (the 'spirit of Nature'—he probably knew them) :

'Whate'er is Born of Mortal Birth  
 Must be consum'd with the Earth  
 To rise from Generation free :  
 Then what have I to do with thee? . . .'

It is an error of judgement to call him 'Prophet of the New Times', when the 'New Times' towards which all his desires and expectations were turned were those of the final 'overcoming of Time'!

Perhaps, too, it is only in a secondary sense that he is to be regarded as an 'existentialist': he himself seems to have preferred the status merely of a philosopher whose approach to his problems happened to be an 'existentialist' one, and whose thought was exercised after an 'existential' manner. 'So-called existentialist philosophy (the novelty of which, by the way, has been greatly exaggerated) regards philosophy as the knowledge of reality through human existence and its concrete manifestations. Now it is a fact that my own existence is the most "existential" of all. In knowing himself man is initiated into mysteries unknown to him through his knowledge of others.' (*Dream and Reality* Preface: pp. x-xi.) Existentialism as such (more particularly having assumed the character of an 'ism') is quite as capable as any other philosophic 'mode', or 'manner' ('scholasticism' is only another example) of functioning *in vacuo*—of becoming merely a 'way of looking at things' (especially in France, as it would seem!). Berdyaev, however, was a Russian, with a Russian's profundity of soul ('. . . in Europe, and perhaps particularly in France, people are affected by a kind of spiritual weariness and have lost the capacity for asking ultimate questions and seeking ultimate solutions. For the Russians, on the contrary, these things are the only ones that matter' op. cit., pp. 164-5). Even from the first, it was not enough for him to know that, in Nicolas Berdyaev, a certain man was in a state of existence (he would even have admitted *Dasein*)—he realized the bitterness and anguish of that condition much more acutely perhaps than does Heidegger!): he needed to know *what* it was that existed—*what* it was that found itself 'there': in a word, *what* it was that was Nicolas Berdyaev. It was this need, an essential part of his nature, which gave to his thought (almost, though not quite, from the beginning) that profoundly *anthropological* character which sets him almost in a class by himself among modern existentialists—which will save him, too, in the long run, from being neatly pigeon-holed in the

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future 'Histories of Philosophy', along with so many of his contemporaries and, thereafter, forgotten along with them. After all, few of them have had a philosophic background with perspectives stretching back quite so far—and ramifying quite so broadly—into the past: most of them seem to have been too busy with the task of philosophising *à la mode*, and for current purposes (and largely *viva voce*, too, since their literary output is by no means great!), to have found much time for the study, for example, of the Greek Fathers—not to speak of Boehme and Paracelsus. And it was no mere drifting with the current of an idle curiosity that carried Berdyaev to these rather remote *entreports*—he was not in search of novelties or luxuries, of 'ivory, apes and peacocks', or of mere intellectual *spicerie*, but of the *meaning of life*—the meaning of his own life.

Dr Rössler expressly disclaims the intention of dealing, in this study, with 'the complicated question of the influences on Berdyaev' (p. 10); otherwise, one would have liked to have seen some reference to the part played in his development by those same Patristic studies: more particularly (and since Berdyaev singles him out in many places for special and appreciative mention)<sup>6</sup> St Gregory of Nyssa. He, at least, was the most 'anthropological' of all the Christian Fathers. The analogies between some of St Gregory's most important doctrines and certain of Berdyaev's leading ideas are numerous and striking. It may not be without significance, for example, that a study has already appeared in Paris, with the title *The Conception of Liberty with St Gregory of Nyssa*.<sup>7</sup> True, there is no reference in it to Berdyaev (except perhaps by way of a dark allusion of the author, in the Introduction; 'We even go so far', he says, 'as to see a kinship between Gregory and certain existentialists, in their manner of posing the problem of Liberty' (op. cit., p. 8). We would suggest, in all seriousness, to Dr Rössler (as to a person perhaps pre-eminently qualified), that there is a fruitful field of research waiting here. Two questions at least would justify, even of themselves, such a study as we have in mind: first, of the connection between Berdyaev's forward-striving vision towards the *eschaton*—his constantly forward-directed yearning towards the final overcoming of time (in so far, too, as this meant for him the attainment of complete *Freedom*) and St Gregory's idea of

<sup>6</sup> e.g. *Dream and Reality*, p. 165 and *Dial. Existentielle*, pp. 38, 141-2 and 227.

<sup>7</sup> J. Galth, *La Conception de la Liberté chez St Grégoire de Nysse*, 1953.

'tension' (*epetasis*) as the necessary condition of life in the Spirit—not only here, but hereafter. And, secondly, of the connection between St Gregory's conception concerning the 'coats of skin' imposed, at the Fall, upon the *protoplastes*, and Berdyaev's conception of Objectification. Since, for him, 'the form of the body is not only of the soul, it is spiritual' (*Slavery and Freedom*, p. 31)—is, in fact the outward expression of the Divine Image in man, what is our flesh, after all, but *spirit in a state of coagulation*—requiring not only to be redeemed, but also to be resolved? A study of such questions as these would be well worth while.

It is earnestly to be hoped that Berdyaev's English publishers will give prompt consideration to a possible translation of this book; there could be no better guide and reading-companion to the large number of Berdyaev's books already in translation with us. The figure of a great and profound thinker and moral philosopher, of a prophetic and far-sighted seer, and of a great Christian spirit emerges, perhaps for the first time, in an independent study, with something approaching its true and proper stature, from the pages of this highly competent and deeply penetrating book.

JOHN TRINICK.

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## THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH ACCORDING TO THE TEACHING OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX<sup>1</sup>

SURVEYING the non-Catholic Christian scene to-day we are confronted not so much with Protestantism as with the ecumenical movement. Ecumenism, whose inception the end of the last century had already witnessed, entered on a new and energetic phase of activity with the recent formation of the World Council of Churches, and the consequent conferences and assemblies that are now a regular feature. The impact of the Second Assembly held at Evanston in 1954 is sufficiently fresh in our memory. It has given a common consciousness to the Protestant world. In India we have evidence of the influence of the movement in the union of several Churches or sects, one notable example being the newly-formed Church of South India.

It would be entirely false to imagine that at these conferences delegates limit themselves to platitudinous expressions of mutual fellowship. The Faith and Order branch of the movement especially has been systematically tackling the fundamental differences that divide the Churches. A large and influential section of the movement feels that the present relationship of the participating Churches is not an end but a beginning, indeed, the first step on the road to real unity. They are striving to forestall the danger of the movement's becoming, in the words of the present Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, 'a narcotic rather than a stimulant'.<sup>2</sup>

Since Catholics have not been permitted to participate (except recently as observers) in the movement or its conferences, it would be interesting to study the atmosphere created by the participation of that religious body which among them all is recognized as being nearest to us in its theological tenets. I mean the G.O.C. True to its traditions, the G.O.C. delegates at Lausanne, at Amsterdam, at Evanston have in unmistakable terms asserted that, much as they desired union, they could make no compromise in 'matters of faith and conscience' or relinquish their 'historic mission'. They have proclaimed in fact, in as many words, that the unity aimed at by the movement can be achieved only when the others enter the one true

<sup>1</sup> With a view to clarity we shall in the course of this essay use their self-chosen appellation 'The Greek Orthodox Church'; briefly G.O.C.

<sup>2</sup> F. and O. Lund, p. 130.

Church, viz. the Greek Orthodox Church. And yet far from causing bad feeling or antagonism their frank and conscientious defence of what is termed 'a difficult position' has won them the respect of many eminent delegates; and their presence and continued co-operation has by all been earnestly sought.

In order to gain a proper understanding of the manner in which G.O.C. influence has been 'preventing the œcumical movement from becoming a sort of pan-Protestantism',<sup>3</sup> an acquaintance with all their theological tenets would be necessary. Our task, however, is simplified by the fact that for an adequate appreciation of the situation it suffices that we study their position on a vital question, the nature of the Church. This statement is corroborated by the experience of the Faith and Order section of the œcumical movement: presenting the reports of the Theological Commissions to the Lund Conferences in 1952 Dr Hodgson declared that differences among the Churches on particular topics, like Ways of Worship and Inter-communion, nay, that most of the issues on which Christians were divided had their roots in different conceptions of the nature of the Church.<sup>4</sup> Nothing more ambitious is, therefore, being attempted here than an exposition of G.O.C. teaching on this fundamental subject.

The student of G.O.C. theology must reconcile himself to working under a frustrating disability. It is the reluctance of their writers to commit themselves to anything resembling a definition or even a precise description. The G.O.C., to quote Prof. Hamilcar Alivisatos, 'contrary to Western practice, avoids definitions even in important subjects of dogmatic teaching. Like other doctrines, the doctrine of the nature of the Church is never fully defined. Leading Greek Orthodox theologians, both Greek and Russian, have often attempted definition but not very successfully. Even the description of the nature of the Church is not always successful'.<sup>5</sup> Fortunately for us participation in the œcumical movement has goaded them into formulating their teaching on some important matters. Hence we have from Alivisatos what he terms 'an attempt to give a rather rough sketch of the nature of the Church according to the teaching of the G.O.C., regardless of later theological theories not generally accepted'.<sup>6</sup> This contribution assumes special significance from the fact that

<sup>3</sup> O.T.O., p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. F. and O. Lund, pp. 111-12.

<sup>5</sup> H. Alivisatos, 'The Holy Greek Orthodox Church', N.O.C., p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

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<sup>7</sup> Ed.

it was approved by the archbishop of Athens and the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece as fully representing the Orthodox point of view.<sup>7</sup>

Another valuable document is the address on the Nature of the Church of Archbishop Chrysostom 'of Athens and of all Greece' delivered at the Lausanne Conference in 1927.

It seems profitable to start with an exposition of their position with regard to the multiplicity of Churches to-day. Concerning the value and relationship of these Churches to the 'authentic one' Alivisatos enumerates four possible theories:

1. The one Church has during the ages been lost among the many.

2. The different Churches are fragments of the one Church; each has retained some essential element of the one so that the simple union of them all will constitute the one Church.

3. The one Church is to be identified in several existing Churches which though separated from one another may each have retained the essential elements of the one Church.

4. Of the many existing Churches there is only one that has 'kept unchanged and uncorrupt the one truth as revealed by the Lord and the Apostles, regardless of later outward developments.'

The first three, he says, are held with modifications by the Protestant Churches, while the fourth is represented by the Catholic and Orthodox Church, each according to its own conception.

The G.O.C. holds that the Church as a divine foundation, as God's work, can neither disappear nor be divided in pieces; none can on his authority bring any change to the Church. The one Church as created by Jesus exists even now intact, undivided, uncorrupt. This oneness of the Church is absolute. Those who have lost sight of it must search and find it; attempts to reconstitute it are futile. The kingdom of God even in its worldly appearance is not to be found 'lo here and lo there' (Luke xvii, 21) but where the Lord and his disciples put it. As in the beginning the apostles had to repudiate as heretics and false brethren other Christian communities not connected with them, so 'the only one authentic Catholic Church' has had since then to reject the several heretical Churches and exclude them from her own communion. Nevertheless she has been tolerant, 'endeavouring by the way

<sup>7</sup> Ed. Preface, N.O.C., p. 9.

of "economy" to reconcile them to herself'. Unity with the Church is undoubtedly the only way of belonging to her. Yet this should be interpreted not as strict uniformity, but as 'unity in things necessary, liberty in things doubtful, in all things love'. The 'branch theory' of the Churches is, however, untenable inasmuch as these have adopted fundamentally divergent conceptions of the substance and the nature of the Church.

This brings us to the G.O.C. claim that she is this one Church. The reason, they assert, is her historically unbroken continuity with the undivided Church; the undivided Church being in its turn the undoubted continuation of the apostolic Church, up to the ninth century at least. Later, a series of innovations which contradicted the biblical foundations of the One Church and were repudiated by the G.O.C. led to a quarrel between East and West and the consequent formation of the R.C.C. as a new Church. At the Reformation again large parts of this Church separated from her resulting in the formation of new Churches which have gone further than the R.C.C. in their innovations. The R.C.C., the first to be severed, made so deep a change in the West that the newly formed Protestant Churches seemed to forget the very existence of the G.O.C. The thought of returning to the still undivided Church did not occur to them even though the G.O.C. had been entirely preserved from 'the corruptions of the innovations' against which the Reformers were fighting. Thus, since, as they term it, 'the Great Schism' of the R.C.C. and the events of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the great majority of Christian people for one reason or another have ceased to belong to the 'One Catholic Church'. Unwillingly she has become one among the Churches, fully aware of the fact that the largest part of Christianity is outside the remaining part of the One Church. Nevertheless, she has desisted from officially condemning their detachment.

We shall now consider certain general characteristics of what they term 'that holy fellowship called *Ekklesia*', and then elucidate the particular marks attributed to the Church.

'As a starting point', says Alivisatos, 'the Church should be considered as the body founded by God, composed of those individuals who have accepted and of those who accept through baptism faith in Christ, kept in an orthodox (right) way . . . her very foundation is faith in Christ demonstrated through love.'<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> N.O.C., pp. 41-42.

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The Church, first of all, is a *divinely-instituted* Body of the Faithful. It is the Kingdom of God founded through the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Resurrection, the Ascension in glory of his Son, and the descent of the Holy Spirit.<sup>9</sup> Jesus Christ founded her 'forming her adherents by true and living faith into one unique mystic body'. Having chosen the twelve apostles, he delivered to them those laws and means upon which the Church, having as its aim the salvation of the faithful, was to be built. The apostles, therefore, who went out into the world founding Churches in every place made it plain that they were acting in his Name and under his instructions. It was this world-wide kingdom established by the Messiah that the prophecies of the Old Testament had foretold, a Church in which he himself would teach the truth and bring about the salvation of mankind. The aim of the Church is, therefore, the sanctification of men and the building up of the Kingdom of God; the uniting of man with God, the fountain of life and blessedness. The eschatological conception of the Church must not be lost sight of since one of its first duties in this world is to prepare its members to be citizens of a new Church, the new Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup> It is through the Church that believers share in the saving work of Christ through grace, unto life everlasting.

This divinely-instituted Church is both *visible and invisible*. The Church of the Old Testament, which prefigured the Church of Christ, was itself a visible society, and it was as a visible society that the prophets depicted the future Church. That it was Christ's intention to constitute the Church as a visible communion or society is evident from his sending forth the disciples to preach the gospel and from the institution of the sacraments. The Church as the instrument of salvation of the faithful, as a fellowship of human beings necessarily implies visibility; it must, moreover, have external marks by which it may be recognized. The practice already from the first century of excluding heretics and schismatics from the Church would be meaningless, and the word 'schism' itself would lose its significance if the Church were only invisible. The fact that the Church has among its members not only good men but also those who partake unworthily of the Body and Blood of the Lord to eat and drink judgement to themselves is another clear proof of its visibility.

<sup>9</sup> W. C. C. Evan., p. 330.

<sup>10</sup> Archbishop Germanos, W.C.C. Amster., p. 59.

The Church is at the same time also invisible. For, as St Paul says, its members are united in one body by grace, and this bond of grace is invisible. The common belief and the sacraments by which the faithful are united also belong in part to the sphere of the unseen.

The Church is therefore twofold in its nature, 'seen and unseen'. This can be inferred from the Bible and the Fathers where the Church is regarded as symbolizing the two natures, divine and human, in the one Person of Christ whose work the Church continues. Like him, therefore, the Church must be at the same time 'outward and inward', human and divine, visible and invisible.

This Church founded by Christ as a visible community is *infallible*. Christ had promised his disciples that he would be with them to the end of all ages and that he would send the Holy Spirit to abide with them. This continuous presence in the Church of Christ and the Holy Spirit preserves it from every error. Inasmuch as Christ, 'the very Truth', is the head of the Church, giving her life and guiding her, it is impossible for her ever to fall into error. Hence the Scripture calls the Church 'the pillar and ground of the truth' (I Tim. iii, 15), and declares 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against her' (Matt. xvi, 18). The invincibility of the Church involves also her unerring infallibility. Individually, of course, bishops or local Churches may err; it is the Church as a whole that is always infallible.

Thus understood, 'the Church is a divinely instituted fellowship of men united one with another by the same faith, sanctified by the same mysteries, and governed by those pastors and teachers whose office originated in the apostles'.<sup>11</sup> This Church according to the definitions of the ancient creeds possesses four distinctive marks: it is One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic.

The Church of Christ is *One*. In his parables he clearly teaches this unity when he speaks of one fold and one shepherd. The apostles also spoke of one Church in which the unity of the faithful was derived from the oneness of the Body of the Church. 'For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body' (I Cor. xii, 13); and 'there is one body and one Spirit . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all' (Eph. iv, 6). The Church is one in her internal life because of the one Christ who vivifies her through the Holy Spirit uniting

<sup>11</sup> His Beatitude, Chrysostom, 'The Nature of the Church', F. and O. Laus, p. 110.

the faithful with himself as the head. This mysterious unity of the faithful finds its special manifestation in the sacrament of Holy Communion. Thus united in Christ the faithful are bidden to live one and the same life, the Christ-life. This unity therefore is not affected by the varieties of languages used in worship, or the external varieties of organization in the many local Churches, or the innumerable members severed in time and space. Nor is its unity destroyed by religious communions divided from it by heresy or schism, for these merely cease to be members of the one Church. This unity, moreover, is not limited to the unity of the Church on earth, but includes also the Church in heaven. It is a unity that transcends time and place since the Church, with Christ as its head, lives with his life eternally.

The Church, as the Body of Christ, receiving its life by the agency of the Holy Spirit, is *Holy*. The Church, 'founded through Christ's blood', is further made holy by the Holy Spirit sanctifying her members who are therefore called 'a royal priesthood' (I Pt. ii, 9-10) 'temples of God' and 'temples of the Holy Spirit' (I Cor. iii, 16-17; 6, 19). This does not imply that the Church has none but holy members. Our Lord himself compared the Church to a field in which wheat and tares grow together, to the net gathering of every kind, to a supper at which unworthy guests take their place with those who are worthy. The presence of these unworthy members does not destroy the holiness of the Church or prevent it from making spiritual progress. And since perfect holiness belongs only to the condition of life everlasting, Christ taught his disciples to pray for the forgiveness of their sins and founded the sacrament of confession. For her part the Church strives with the means at her disposal to bring about the holiness of its members. If she casts away some from her fellowship it is because they cannot be made better—like withered branches that bear no fruit and are cast into the fire to be burnt (John xv, 1 ff.).

The Church is *Catholic*. It knows no local limitations. It is 'ecumenical and world-wide', as that Kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed (Matt. viii, 11). Christ himself foreshadowed the Catholicity of the Church by sending out the apostles to the uttermost parts of the world. Again on Pentecost day this was strikingly manifested when the apostles filled with the Holy Spirit began to preach in a multitude of tongues. Local Churches were founded early in the Church's history, particularly through the preaching of St Paul; yet, all the local

Churches in their totality constituted the 'Church of the Churches, the Catholic Church'. This Church, as contrasted with the heretical communities severed from it, was the one and only true Church, and stood alone in the possession of the true faith. Though scattered over the world it existed as one whole through the identity of its faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, Catholicity and the right and true faith of the Church were one and the same thing; and so the term Catholic Church meant 'the Church which possesses the true and right faith'. And for the same reason the name Catholic was applied not only to the whole body but also to each local Church.

The Church is *Apostolic*. As God sent his Son, and the Son his disciples, the apostles, so the Church founded in the world sends out her apostles to bring the world to Christ. But to accomplish this aim it must maintain unspotted the apostolic doctrine and tradition, exactly as these existed in the time of the apostles. For 'the apostolic doctrine and tradition, with the apostolic succession, are the elements in which the apostolicity of the Church consists. Only that Church can be apostolic which has and retains from the apostles themselves the true doctrine and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Through the divinely constituted hierarchy, and so alone, this Church is connected by unbroken succession with the apostles and keeps the deposit committed unto it by them.'<sup>12</sup> The apostles whom the Lord chose spread the Church throughout the world; and through them their successors were appointed, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to continue without interruption the work of the salvation of believers—'being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone' (Ep. ii, 20).

As in the primitive Church, those governing by duty together with those governed by right (because of the accepted faith) form the 'fullness of the Church' (*pleroma tes ekklēsias*). The authority of the Church rests on this fullness; it is chiefly expressed by the conscience of the Church (*suneidesis tes ekklēsias*) i.e. the common mind both of clergy and laymen. The highest administrative authority is the Ecumenical Synod because, the G.O.C. claims, of the democratic system which she has exactly kept. Only the first seven Ecumenical Synods are, however, accepted as being Councils (not in the later confessional sense) of the undivided Church. A new Ecumenical Synod is, on their own admission, greatly desired and needed in view of several vital church problems.<sup>13</sup> But

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>13</sup> N.O.C., p. 49.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid..

the near future holds no hope of its achievement, for the G.O.C. does not want 'a Council of her own in the confessional sense'. The new Council when convened should be such as will be recognized by all as the Synod of the whole undivided Church; all Christian Churches should with equal right participate in it. Its accomplishment therefore depends on the solving of the problem of separation through the return of the separated Churches to the G.O.C. Meanwhile, the fact of her being a federation of independent Churches enables her to continue her life and development even as in the primitive Church, when persecutions or other external reasons rendered the convocation of the Ecumenical Council impossible.<sup>14</sup>

We might recall now the salient points in G.O.C. teaching on the nature of the Church. The Church is one, visible (militant) and invisible (triumphant), whose mission, the salvation of the faithful, is effected by means of the Word and the Sacraments. 'Church order' as instituted by Jesus Christ, her head and leader, guarantees the purity of her teaching as also the success of her mission in the world; her authority rests on the truth revealed through him. 'Clergy and laity make together the fullness (*pleroma*) of the Church and the expression of its authority through the conscience of the Church, which is the expression of the mystical body of the Church.'<sup>15</sup> This Church which has never ceased to exist, contradicts by its very existence all efforts to rehabilitate it other than by union on the old basis.

This conception, in the words of Archbishop Chrysostom, 'by no means far removed from that view of the Church's nature which was held in the ancient and undivided Church . . . avoids both the extravagances of Romanism and the extremes of the theories most opposed to Romanism in the Western world'.<sup>16</sup>

A few concluding remarks by way of criticism and evaluation. The good points in the doctrine just exposed, as also most of the erroneous tenets, are evident enough to dispense with express enumeration. Only to the more significant elements, therefore, shall we turn our attention. On the positive side we would indicate the proximity to Catholic teaching of their conception of the unity of the Church in general: the apostolic succession and the continuity through the bishops maintained through the sacraments. Catholic influence is apparent in their teaching concerning the four 'notes' of the Church. Significant also is the fact that they have

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>16</sup> F. and O. Laus, p. 115.

not endorsed the untraditional views of those Russian Orthodox theologians who have insisted on the consent of the faithful as an absolute requirement for unity and infallibility. On the other hand certain deficiencies in their stand must not be lost sight of. Thus, the relation between the visible and the invisible aspects of the Church are not clearly formulated. Again, in refusing to accept any but the first seven Ecumenical Councils they are being illogical and untrue to their own past traditions. Nor are they successful in their attempts to explain away an incapacity to convoke for centuries another Ecumenical Council. To feel powerless to change this situation in the foreseeable future in spite of important Church problems that are clamouring for a solution cannot but be an indication of decadence; even more tragic is their own qualification of this decadence as being 'not complete'.<sup>17</sup> It is almost tantamount to forfeiting their claim to be a living Church, much less the only true Church.

Then there is the important question of the primacy, which they cannot satisfactorily explain, and by preference avoid. In this we need ask no more of them than that they accept a solution consistent with their essential doctrines on the unity and infallibility of the Church. If the Church that Christ founded was not merely an invisible but a visible community as well, then it argues a visible head on earth. Their failure to see the truth in this vital matter seems to stem from a false conception of Christian history: a habit of attributing to the past their present position and deductions. An example is their statement that during the first centuries it was persecutions and external circumstances that prevented the holding of Ecumenical Councils; the reason rather was that the early Church had not yet evolved and developed in this direction. Their theory of 'the federation of independent Churches' is also historically false, for the primacy of jurisdiction and infallibility was commonly accepted in the early Church. While the growth of the patriarchates was admitted as being only an ecclesiastical institution, the divine foundation of the papacy was generally accepted; and, if this latter was by some occasionally called in question, their stand was by the popes vehemently rejected, nor did it ever find favour with the universal Church. That papal approbation was essential for the constitution of an Ecumenical Council was recognized; denied such approbation it remained merely local. Again, although the relationship between the pope and the Oriental

<sup>17</sup> N.O.C., pp. 49-50.

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Church was not such as subsists to-day between the pope and Catholic bishops, nevertheless, when local disputes defied solution recourse to the pope was normal procedure. It is in this light that one can understand their declaration, made at the period of their breach with Rome, that consequent on the defection of Rome the primacy had passed to Constantinople.

Finally, they seem to forget that as late as 1439 at the Florentine Ecumenical Council the Greek Church was as a body fully represented and that their canonical, disciplinary, and liturgical customs being recognized as legitimate, their delegates signed without pressure the decree recognizing among other things the primacy of the Roman pontiff.

We cannot conclude without pointing once again to the new star that has appeared on the horizon : the ecumenical movement. To change the metaphor, while G.O.C. influence is on the whole giving the movement a Catholic orientation, the ecumenical movement in its turn, by obliging the G.O.C. to clarify its views on doctrinal matters, is sending them back to traditional views of their teaching that are similar to our own. It has also served to take their mind off the petty controversies they had previously sustained in an attempt to discredit the Catholic Church. Let us hope and pray that before long, being vouchsafed a clearer insight into the true nature of the Church, they might obtain a respite to their wandering by the discovery of their long cherished haven, the 'Una Sancta'.

S. NORONHA, S.J.

De Nobili College, Poona.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TO THE EDITOR, *E.C.Q.*

Dear Rev. Fr,

SINGAPORE

Some of your Readers may care to see the enclosed Photographs of the Armenian Orthodox Church of St Gregory the Illuminator in Singapore city which is not only, I think, the only 'Eastern' Church in this part of the Far East but is one of the oldest buildings in Singapore as according to a local Guide Book it was 'built, without the present Tower and Spire, by George Drumgoole Coleman in 1835. In its original form it had a domed roof, supporting a small bell turret: this was removed, and the present tower and spire added at the east end, by an unrecorded architect between 1847 and 1856. As it stands this is a building of considerable elegance and charm.'

Latterly the church has been the object of certain 'restoration' which has alas included its exterior repainting with what appears to be a dead white lead paint which is presumably an economical preservative as it has been similarly used on other notable buildings whose appearance, like that of the Armenian Church has suffered accordingly from the picturesque angle, the old pale cream colour wash, with contrasting paintwork and usually red tiled roof being far more pleasing to the eye.

Although in a central portion of Singapore city where land must be at a premium, this delightful old building is still surrounded by a spacious churchyard, a rather quaint feature of which is the miniature banana plantation behind the church.

I understand the Syrian Orthodox are planning to build a church here in the near future but whether this is likely to be situated anywhere near that of St Gregory or in another part of this widespread city I do not know.

With all good wishes,

Yours etc.,

JOHN RAMSAY-FAIRFAX.

Singapore, 3rd April 1957.

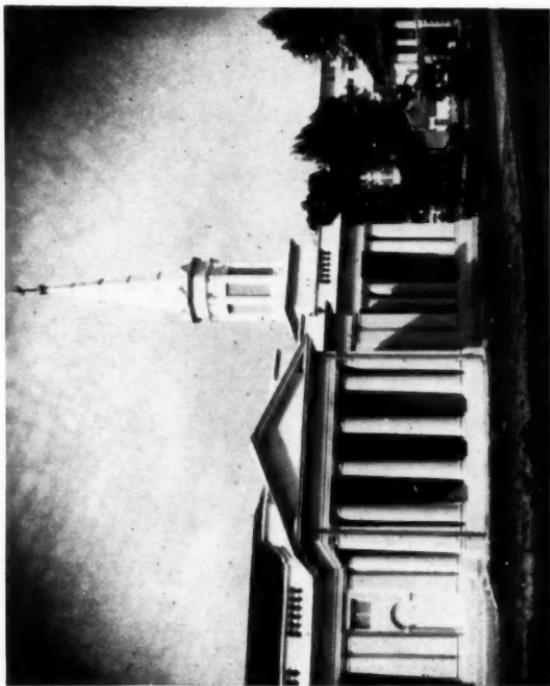
### JORDAN

In the *E.C.Q.* for the spring of 1956 we published some letters of Fr G. Habra, the Catholic-Melkite parish priest of Nablus, Jordan. He wrote of the way in which he is building up his Byzantine rite parish, most of his people having been under the Latin rite for the last ten years.

In the following letters he tells of his relations with local



Banana Plantation in the Churchyard of the Armenian Church, Singapore



Armenian Church of St Gregory the Illuminator, Singapore  
Front View



Father George Habra standing on the roof of the Greek Orthodox church in the village of Rafidia (by Nablus)



Correspondent Fr Ivan Orlowsky who in the first place obtained permission for the letters to appear in the E.C.Q.

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Orthodox and shows how a zealous Greek Catholic priest can prepare the way for reunion with the Orthodox.—EDITOR.

Nablus, 4th April 1957.

Dear Father,

Concerning the news of the parish here, I think it has progressed ever since you knew about it through my letters. We are preparing now seriously for the building of the church. I think I can summarize the nature and reasons of the progress.

1. The region of Nablus is the most Arab of all Arab regions, and consequently most resentful of foreign influence, whether on national or religious grounds. As our Greek Catholic Church is the most 'Arab' of all Churches (even the Greek Orthodox have a foreign element since their hierarchy is entirely Hellenic) it acquires thereby a great natural prestige, at least in principle, since many minds are still corrupt through hybrid and superficial Latinizing and Protestantizing influences.

2. In political currents these foreign influences, especially the latter one, are falling into gradual but hopeless dissolution, the Orthodox spirit (I mean the spirit, whether it exists in our Greek Catholic or in the Greek Orthodox Churches) is slowly but surely rising. This revival and religious consciousness permit me to follow an altogether different line of policy with the Orthodox here from that taken in other districts.

On my arrival at Nablus—Rapidia, I went during the first months to sing the liturgy for the Orthodox parish priests, and when they came to know well my Orthodox spirit through our continual visits to each other they came often to invite me on such occasions, and returned the visits, singing both of them at my *Akathiston* last year.

This year, I have been bolder : I have come to an agreement with the Greek Orthodox parish priest of Rapidia, to celebrate (as our Easter and theirs fall on the same day this year) the most important offices of the pre-Easter period (excluding the Mass) together, he coming with his parish to my church for the *Akathistons*, and participating *actively*, and I going to his church with my parish for the offices of the spouse, Crucifixion and Funeral of our Lord—all the preaching is left to me. Offices including Communion (that is, the divine liturgies) are not to be made in common but separately, everyone to his own parish and in his own church. The effects of such procedure are tremendous, and will surely end in the fusion of these two parishes in the Greek Catholic Church quite shortly.

FR GEORGE HABRA.

The next letter is in reply to my question as to what line Fr George's bishop took of this.

NABLUS, 22nd April 1957.

Dear Fr,

As regards my dealing with the Orthodox, my patriarch himself, His Beatitude Maximos IV, having learned about it, was immensely pleased and very much approved of it, he gave me two blessings. A notable superior (Latin) even remarked that I was doing nothing else but returning to the state of relations as it existed in the seventeenth century between Orthodox and Greek Catholics. The effects were as I expected : first, the offices of the *Akathiston* as well as those of Holy Week, drew a great number of people (I mean comparatively to the small number of Christians in this area), greater than both parishes would have drawn had they worked separately.

Especially numerous were the people at the two famous offices of the Great Thursday and Great Friday, called respectively the office of the Sufferings of our Saviour, and the office of the Funeral of Christ (*Orthos* of Saturday) : the first one is the most lengthy of all Byzantine offices (when performed in a normal manner and unabridged, it takes four hours at least) but has the characteristic of being also very beautiful, pathetic, and least of all, monotonous, monotony totally excluded from it, for it intersperses in its singing all the eight tones. Of course for those who ignore the tones, which are very characteristic of Byzantine singing and execute the office on one stupid lawless tone, it would be very monotonous, but we were very careful to follow exactly the directions of the liturgy, and the office was full of life and colour. The other office was also very splendid, though because of the great throng of people and lack of space, a little disorder ensued. Its peculiar distinction is the beauty and power of dramatic appeal, which it shares with the Byzantine liturgy. The co-operation had a natural and desirable effect : 'we' learned to acquire the Orthodox spirit, at least those who possessed it not, and 'they' learned more discipline and order.

FR GEORGE HABRA.

We should like further letters concerning the relations of the Orthodox with Catholics of the Byzantine (or other Eastern) rites.

THE EDITOR.

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## NEWS AND COMMENTS

*Relations Between Anglican and Presbyterian Churches* (S.P.C.K., 1957) 3s. 6d.

This is the Report of the latest Conference between the Anglican Churches in England and Scotland and the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland and England. There have been earlier Conferences—1932-4 and 1949-51. At these meetings the representatives of the Anglican Church in Scotland and the Presbyterian Church in England had been present only as observers. In this 1957 Conference all four groups were there as full participants and on equal terms. These recent discussions were initiated by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the request of the Convocations.

Those responsible for the conferences felt that the questions arising between Episcopalian and Presbyterians lay at the heart of the differences among other divisions in the Body of Christ and hence a reconciliation between these could not but help the whole field of œcumical relationships. As a result of previously meeting one another in the œcumical movement they were able to take for granted four important agreements, to quote :

1. 'Unity is not a contingent feature of the Church's life, but is of the essence of it . . . The Church, therefore, cannot but be One, its existence being grounded in that Divine realm where disunity is unthinkable ; and of this fundamental unity God has given the separated "Churches" a recovered awareness and experience, most notably in and through the œcumical movement.'
2. 'Disunity in witness and mission spells not only a wasteful use of limited resources but also a deeply damaging contradiction between message and life, between the Biblical witness to the oneness of the Church and divided "Churches" seeking to commend the one Gospel. The Church cannot adequately fulfil its ministry of reconciliation in the world so long as it manifestly fails to heal and reconcile its own divisions.'
3. 'Another factor which has affected the shape of our Report has been the turn given œcumical thinking about the nature of the Church.'
4. 'The South Indian demonstration that this kind of unity between Episcopalian and Presbyterians is a practical possibility, and not merely a dream of theorists.'

It is to be hoped that they will meditate on Number 1. This should lead to reconciliation with the Catholic Church. Two resolutions were taken :

"That no action or decision be taken by the governing bodies of the four Churches immediately upon the presentation of the Report beyond a careful study and examination by the Churches according to the constitutional procedure."

"That at a later stage and as a consequence upon such study the four Churches, if they all agree, should make together a solemn resolve to seek reconciliation and unity with one another."

And in order to further this end a Sunday each year should be set apart as a special day of prayer for this purpose."

That there should be exchange of pulpits.

That sanction should be given (on an occasional basis) for the admission of the communicants of the Presbyterian Churches to receive Holy Communion in the Anglican churches. On the Presbyterian side such a practice is already allowed.

The most important modification and change in Church polity as they see it will be : on the Presbyterian side the adoption of a form of episcopy acceptable to the Churches concerned, and on the episcopal side, the development of a form of order in which the ministry and the laity would be closely linked together in the decisions concerned with the government and doctrine of the Church.

This Report needs careful study. It is this and specially the office of 'Bishops-in-Presbytery' that will be one of the main subjects for discussion at the Lambeth Conference 1958.

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#### *Bulletin D'Orientations Ecuméniques*

In our last issue we gave a notice of this new review, here are some more details of its origin and its aims from a correspondent who has interviewed the editor, Fr Antony Chicri.

"The origin of the *Bulletin* is in the Catholic ecumenical group of Beirut. For the last three to four years there have been reunions of an ecumenical group of Catholics and Orthodox, mostly lay, under the authorization of the Melkite bishop of Beirut, Lord Nabaa. In time it was found necessary to contact a larger circle than that offered by a few enthusiasts at Beirut not typical of their communities at large. So the primary aim of the bulletin is to get in touch with a larger

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public, all laymen who, while lacking technical knowledge, can be interested in reunion, and open their minds beyond the borders of their political groups.

At present in the Lebanon each *Rite* is separated from the others by questions of family influence and political divisions. A certain percentage of Lebanese members of parliament must be Maronite, Greek Orthodox, Moslem, etc. Each religious group is a sort of freemasonry with mutual help among its members, government influence. This makes reunion work very hard and the bulletin is trying to pass over these intellectual barriers.

With this end in view, all the articles must be kept non-technical, it is not aimed at specialists.

Each number has a reflection by a prominent layman—Dr Laham, founder of the Orthodox youth movement, Dr Malik, also an Orthodox, and the former U.N.O. delegate.

There is a theological orientation on an aspect of ecumenism by a priest. Also a review of the press notices on ecumenism.'

As we pointed out before, among the collaborators there are Orthodox and French and English Protestants.

For further information write to Fr Antony Chicri (or Shikri), The Melkite Patriarchal College, Beirut, Lebanon.

## OBITUARY

Stephan, former archbishop of Sofia and exarch of Bulgaria, died at the age of 79 in a monastery in Bulgaria where he had been interned since 1949.

R.I.P.

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We specialize in books on the Eastern Churches, both NEW and Out of Print. We issue booklists of available NEW items. We are always ready to purchase used books on this subject.

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## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

*St Basil the Great and Apollinaris of Laodicea* by the late G. L. Prestige, D.D., Canon of St Paul's Cathedral. Edited from his papers by Henry Chadwick, Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge (London, S.P.C.K. 1956) 12s. 6d.

It is essential to refer the reader to the work of Fr H. de Riedmatten, O.P., promised in the Preface of Dr Prestige's book, and published in two parts in the *Journal of Theological Studies, New Series*, VII. 2 (Oct. 1956), pp. 199-210—a critical edition of the Greek text of the correspondence—and VIII. 1 (April 1957), pp. 53-70—Fr de Riedmatten's analysis of the evidence, and tentative conclusions.

Dr Prestige's interest in this correspondence (Basil, Epp. 361-4) appears already in his great pioneer work *God in Patristic Thought*, and still more in his *Fathers and Heretics*. It is not surprising to find him engaged at the time of his death on a closer study of it. We are very thankful to have the work published as far as possible as he left it. It is marked with his usual brilliance and acumen, and seems finally to establish the genuineness of the correspondence (of which an English translation is given), as well as that of the Apollinarian writing, often known from its second editor as the 'Sebastiani Letter', which later provided Eustace of Sebaste with ammunition for an attack on St Basil. This letter is also given in translation, and the Greek text is added in Appendix A. A second Appendix gives us Dr Prestige's paper read to the First Congress of Patristic Studies in Oxford in 1951, on 'Ancient Misrepresentations of Apollinaris'.

Fr de Riedmatten refers to Dr Prestige as his 'master'. He was working as his pupil, and we may wonder whether a joint publication had been projected. It is better, in fact, to have their works independent of each other, as they would be unlikely to have reached agreement on detail—though we may believe that on some points at least Dr Prestige would have revised his conclusions. A number of these would in fact appear untenable, or highly questionable. The editor points out one of them in his preface—Ep. 364 is to be dated to A.D. 363-4, not to A.D. 362. For further examples—it is not the case (p. 8) that Apollinaris is 'clearly represented' in Sozomen, H.E. vi, 25, as being already a priest in A.D. 346—so there is no need for us to reject Basil's statement in Ep. 224 that he had written to him 'as layman to layman'. If Fr de Riedmatten is right in placing Ep. 363 (which has no manifest

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connection with Ep. 364) before Ep. 361, which would then probably be referring directly to it, we may here have such a letter—itself presupposing others earlier. Basil had certainly not long been a deacon when he wrote Ep. 361. And our first clear reference to Apollinaris as ordained is Athanasius' description of him as bishop in the *Tomus ad Antiochenos* (A.D. 362).

Again, in dating Ep. 361 to A.D. 359 and Seleucia, Dr Prestige jumps very suddenly from a conjecture to a virtual certainty. What Philostorgius tells us is, not that Basil was at Seleucia in A.D. 359, but that he was at Constantinople with Basil of Ancyra and Eustace of Sebaste in A.D. 360—as deacon, surely, not to his namesake of Ancyra, but to Eustace, who will have gone aside, *en route* for the capital, to snatch him from his Pontic retreat. The debate there—in which our Basil kept silence—provides, as de Riedmatten points out, the atmosphere for Ep. 361, with its preference for *ἀπαραλλάκτως δυοις* as against *δυοούσιος*, and the incentive for the *Contra Eunomium*, wherein the unemphatic acceptance of *δυοούσιος* may in fact be the result of Apollinaris' vindication thereof in Ep. 362.

But here the Sebastiani Letter comes into the picture. For de Riedmatten is surely right, as against Prestige, in seeing in it another reply to Ep. 361. There is no proof here of indebtedness such as Prestige affirms to the *Contra Eunomium*—echoes might tell either way, and the parallels with Ep. 362 do not read like quotations. We have the impression rather of alternative drafts—though, curiously, while Ep. 362 has language suggestive of subordinationism, this is replaced in the Sebastiani Letter by a passage which was quickly suspected of Sabellianism. Prestige claims, and de Riedmatten in support shows convincingly from parallels in other works, that both offending passages are fully in place in an Apollinarian context, and in that context need not involve heresy about the Trinity.

Prestige may have been encouraged in his later dating by a mistranslation. He renders 'τὴν μὲν δύναμιν οὐκ ἔξελινας τοῦ δυοούσιου' by 'You have not *distorted* the significance . . .' In Patristic Greek it quite certainly means 'You did not *refuse* the meaning'—followed by 'But you were hesitating to accept the *word*'. The reference to Ep. 361 is then perfectly clear. In the same passage, the emendation *έταρσττες* is undoubtedly wrong (see the Editor's footnote). The meaning is 'It did not upset you . . .'

Prestige was a pioneer. We must expect to find errors of judgement in his brilliance, flaws in his wide knowledge. His zest for the Fathers is ever that of an explorer in a new and foreign land—and need the Fathers be a foreign land for us? But our great debt to him remains.

DERWAS J. CHITTY.

*A Modern Pilgrim in the Holy Land* by André Frossard. Pp. 205 (The Harvill Press, 1957) 13s. 6d.

This is a delightful book and full of information. The author divides the books into three unequal parts: *Itinerary*, *The Approaches*, *Jerusalem*. The first three chapters: Buried Cities, History Visible and Invisible, One Way Traffic in the Holy Land—are typical of the rest of the book.

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*The Approaches* speak of Baalbek, the road to Damascus, the Dead Sea and then one comes to Jerusalem.

In the third part five chapters delve into the depths of all that is meant by the Holy City. The author is a Catholic in every sense of the word.

This is a guide to the Holy Land, its peoples, their history, and their present day problems. It is fully illustrated by the author. The book should be read and if one is going to the Holy Land should be taken as an invaluable companion.

B.W.

*The Byzantine Liturgy* (Russian Center, New York, 1955).

This is the second revised edition of an English translation of the liturgies of St John Chrysostom and St Basil.

Fr Paul Dickinson in the Preface says: 'In the light of numerous suggestions from scholars and friends we have tried to correct these (inaccuracies) and have aimed at an even smoother and more modern speech'. The Litany for the Dead and Prayers after Communion have been added. It is well printed.

K.F.E.W.

*The Holy Fire* by Robert Payne. Pp. 304 (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1957) \$5.00.

This book has had its forbears in Newman's *Historical Sketches* and Prestige's *Fathers and Heretics*. It is interesting that list includes Dionysius the Areopagite and Gregory

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Palamas but surprising that St Cyril of Alexandria is not mentioned. The book meets a real need, it not only gives the stories of the Eastern Fathers but Mr Payne tells us what sort of man each particular saint is, his teaching and his proper place in the history of the Church.

The author has certainly given us in his selection the full Patristic authority for the peculiar ascetic teaching of the Eastern Church: the Cappadocians and Gregory Palamas. Yet Alexandria is fully represent (except St Cyril), Clement, Origin, and St Athanasius.

A really important and stimulating book.

DOM BEDE WINSLOW.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

The Madras Cultural Academy: *Indian Culture and the Fullness of Christ*.

Les Editions du Cerf: *La Migration D'Abraham*, Philon D'Alexandrie; *Homelies Pascales*.

S.P.C.K.: *Relations Between Anglican and Presbyterian Churches*.

Sheed and Ward: *The Revolt of Asia*, Christopher Dawson.

P.F. Rome: *La Théologie d'Elie bar-Sénaya*, Emmanuel-Karim Delly.

Cairo: *Studia Orientalia. I*, P. G. Golubovich, O.F.M.

### REVIEWS

*The Church Quarterly Review*, 1875—1957.

*Les Cahiers Coptes*. No. 13—14, 1957.

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